



February 1, 2010

Via email: [dot.stip@alaska.gov](mailto:dot.stip@alaska.gov)

ADOT & PF Division of Program Development

To Whom This Concerns:

Thank you very much for considering the following comments from the Alaska Transportation Priorities Project (ATPP) and the Alaska Center for the Environment (ACE) on Draft Amendment 1 to the 2010-2013 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

ATPP works with conservation organizations, transit advocates, community and governmental leaders, neighborhood organizations, engineers, and others to promote sensible transportation systems and policies in Alaska. Lois Epstein has directed ATPP from Anchorage since January 2007 and has been a Professional Engineer for 20 years licensed in both Alaska and Maryland. In general, ATPP supports safe, economic, well-maintained, and environmentally-appropriate transportation systems in Alaska.

ACE is a non-profit environmental education and advocacy organization, whose mission is to enhance Alaskans' quality of life by protecting wild places, fostering sustainable communities and promoting recreational opportunities. ACE advocates for sustainable policy on behalf of nearly 7,000 Alaskan members.

### **General Comments**

ATPP supports the stimulus/economic recovery projects proposed in Amendment 1, especially those focused on pedestrian and bicycling facilities and transit infrastructure. In general, ATPP supports projects focusing on infrastructure preservation and maintenance, safety upgrades, transit, and essential upgrades of existing infrastructure to prepare for the proposed natural gas pipeline from the North Slope.

### **Wildlife and Fish Crossings**

ATPP believes that federal stimulus money is an excellent opportunity for the state to provide necessary wildlife and fish crossings as part of road construction projects, and the amendment should expand existing STIP-approved projects to include these components. One of Alaska's greatest economic strengths - making it a premier tourist destination - is its free-ranging wildlife and healthy fish populations; ADOT & PF surely does not want to harm those natural attributes.

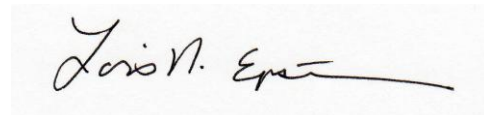
Along these lines, ATPP supports changes to Need ID 11921 in the 2010-2013 STIP to be included in Amendment 1 expanding the project so it covers the wildlife (i.e., moose and bear) crossing mitigation activities proposed by Kenai National Wildlife Refuge (KNWR) staff in correspondence and discussions with ADOT & PF staff. Though ADOT & PF has proposed some wildlife mitigation activities, they have been both limited and unacceptable to the KNWR and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service biologists involved. Federal stimulus money, however, can provide a unique opportunity to bridge the funding gap between ADOT & PF and KNWR staff proposals for wildlife mitigation. ATPP believes there is enough time for ADOT & PF to perform the design work needed to make these vital, KNWR wildlife mitigation measures “shovel-ready” so the measures can receive federal stimulus funding.

### **Transit Operating Costs**

As ADOT & PF knows, the last federal stimulus bill allowed up to 10% of the amount dedicated to transit to be used for operating expenses. Need ID 24996 in Draft Amendment 1 does not mention operating expenses and probably should as that may be the most pressing need for some rural transit systems in the state.

Thank you very much for your attention to these comments.

Sincerely,



Lois N. Epstein, P.E.  
Director, ATPP



Valerie Connor  
Conservation Director, ACE

cc: Robert Ruffner, Kenai Watershed Council  
Trisha White, Defenders of Wildlife (Washington, DC)